



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

Once again the Arizona Office of Tourism is a proud co-sponsor of Channel 3's *Good Morning Arizona* Road Trip. Over the course of two weeks, April 30 through May 11, the *Good Morning Arizona* Road Trip has visited and will continue to visit destinations within your communities to help show off some of Arizona's exhilarating signature scenery and diverse cultural experiences. Monday through Friday, the program will air live each morning from a different Arizona location highlighting the people, places and experiences that make Arizona such a great vacation destination. This partnership with the *Good Morning Arizona* Road Trip kicks off AOT's in-state summer campaign and is a tremendous opportunity to help viewers who are new to Arizona, and even the ones that have made this state their home, discover the vibrant variety of the Grand Canyon State.

Have a great week.

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Save the Date: Grand Impressions Workshops 2007

Grand Impressions workshops reach out to front-line tourism industry employees, conveying the importance of customer service in the travel industry and offering general information about Arizona attractions, enabling these employees to become ambassadors for the state. The 2007 workshops will feature the latest trends, research and information in customer service when working for and/or with older adults and Americans with disabilities. There will be a presentation by the Arizona Game and Fish Department on our state's Watchable Wildlife and an in-depth presentation on Arizona tourism attractions. There will also be an opportunity to tour the meeting locations. Workshop participants will receive a certificate of completion and a complimentary lunch, along with free resource materials from presenters. The Grand Impression workshops are free of charge to those who wish to participate. Reservations are required and will be accepted on first come, first service basis, as seating is limited. Please register soon. For more information, or to make a reservation, please contact Sarah Martins at 602-364-3687 or via e-mail at smartins@azot.gov.

May 9, 2007

8:15 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Pueblo Grande Museum and Archaeological Park

4619 E. Washington Street

Phoenix, AZ 85034

May 11, 2007

8:15 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Arizona Sonora Desert Museum-Ocotillo Café

2021 N. Kinney Road

Tucson, AZ 85743

May 30, 2007

8:15 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Tim's Toyota Center (Formerly Prescott Valley Convention & Events Center)

3201 North Main Street

Prescott Valley, AZ 86314

AOT Needs Speakers for Call Center Training

Each month the Arizona Office of Tourism has the opportunity to help train the call center agents that answer in-bound calls from consumers seeking travel information. AOT is seeking interested parties that would like to present to the call center agents. This is a great opportunity for communities throughout the state to showcase their attractions and activities to an audience that daily promotes Arizona as a premier travel destination. The training sessions are held at the call center located in Tucson on the third Tuesday of each month. If you would like to learn more about presenting to the call center, please contact Traci Gomes at 602-364-3699 or via e-mail at tgomes@azot.gov.

Representatives Needed for the Visitor Services Advisory Committee

AOT is in need of a representative from a Local Visitor Information Center (LVIC) from the Arizona West Coast Region and North Central Region for the Visitor Services Advisory Committee. The Visitor Services Advisory Committee reviews applications from communities seeking designation as a LVIC as well as provides support and assistance to AOT on programs

associated with the LVIC programs such as Grand Impressions, annual evaluations, and with new enhancements for the state's Visitor Services program. If you have any questions or are interested in serving on the Visitor Services Advisory Committee please send notice of interest to Brian Lang at 602-364-3694 or via e-mail at blang@azot.gov by 5:00 p.m. Friday, May 18, 2007.

Trippin' with AOT

Arizona Represented at National Tour Association Spring Meet

Jennifer Sutcliffe, Travel Industry Marketing Manager at AOT, attended the National Tour Association (NTA) Spring Meet in Kelowna, British Columbia April 26-28, 2007. Spring Meet is an annual educational and partnering conference specifically designed for tour operators. Approximately 300 travel industry representatives attend the spring event. AOT co-sponsors an evening event with the Scottsdale CVB, which allows us to attend the three-day event for networking and educational opportunities to which few suppliers have access. Twenty-nine people attended this highly anticipated evening reception and dinner – including NTA past presidents, board members and key NTA staff. For more information, please contact Jennifer Sutcliffe at 602-364-3693 or via e-mail at jsutcliffe@azot.gov.

Industry News

Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association Announces One-of-a-Kind Online Auction

The AZHLA is launching the Discover Arizona online auction in conjunction with National Tourism Week. The auction features one-of-a-kind packages that will tempt and tantalize travelers from across the country. Available now for previews, www.discoverazvacations.com beckons guests to browse, bid and buy, with the auction officially beginning May 7th at 8:00 a.m., EDT; ending May 18th at 5:00 p.m. EDT. Proceeds from the auction event will support Arizona Hotel & Lodging Association's Education Foundation, which provides continuing education scholarships for current students and offers opportunities for high school students anxious to pursue a career in this growing field. Additionally, community relations programs and activities, which in turn support Arizona's hospitality community, will also be funded by this effort.

Park Visits Down, But Fees Are Up

A four-year program to increase national parks entrance fees and make them more uniform could discourage many Americans from visiting their national parks—especially parks that are close to home, some parks boosters say. The federal government's move in January to replace the National Park Service's \$50 annual pass with a new \$80 multi-agency pass is also drawing fire. The National Parks Conservation Association, a non-partisan group that lobbies on behalf of national parks, recently called on Congress to allow the park service to bring back the less expensive pass, which allowed free entry to the 145 parks that charge fees. Another 246 national park sites do not have entrance fees. The new America the Beautiful Pass can be used at about 2,000 recreation sites operated by the park service, the U.S. Forest Service and several other federal agencies. (*USA Today.com*)

Disney World Hotels Going Smoke-Free

In what company officials are calling the largest single-site resort complex to initiate such smoking restrictions, Walt Disney World announced Tuesday it will ban smoking in all guest

rooms, indoor public areas, balconies and other locations at all company-owned and -operated hotels, and all Disney Vacation Club resorts at Disney World. That is 20 properties altogether. Smoking will be allowed in designated, outdoor smoking areas only. The ban will take effect June 1. During the past five year, guest demand for smoking rooms at the Walt Disney World resort has been declining steadily. Currently, less than 3.5 percent of Walt Disney World's 24,000 resort rooms are smoking optional, Disney said. (*Orlando Sentinel.com/Business*)

Heart Group Will Visit Only Smoke-Free Cities

The American Heart Association said Monday that it will hold all future meetings – including its annual conference, which attracts 30,000 people – only in cities with smoke-free workplace laws. A small but growing number of health-related groups, such as the National Cancer Institute and American Public Health Association, have adopted similar policies. Organizations today have a greater number of smoke-free cities from which to choose. Nearly 2,600 municipalities restrict smoking, including 455 that ban smoking in all workplaces. (*Page 9D, USA Today*)

A Growing Trend: Gender-Specific Trips

Camping, hunting, fishing, hiking – just a handful of excursions guys take together each year. Alone. No women allowed. The country's lakes, rivers and streams still draw scores of men seeking to bond with friends. But these days, fellas are finding higher-end haunts offering off-road driving, whiskey tasting, drag racing lessons and private poker tournaments. Sometimes called “manscapes,” they're an example of a larger trend in leisure travel: gender-specific jaunts, says [MSNBC](#). Research conducted last year by I'm In!, a Waltham, Mass.-based company whose Web site helps users create gender-specific group trips, in collaboration with Compete, a Boston-based online market research firm, found that an estimated 20 million men currently spend \$10 billion to \$12 billion a year on guys-only getaways. “Social travel is ripe for massive growth,” says Stephen DiMarco, vice president and chief marketing officer at Compete.” Travel is the largest ecommerce category, and social networking is the fastest growing online category.” A study by Compete of two million Web users found that among those polled, 38 percent of men and 34 percent of women had taken a gender-based trip in the last year. The average group size was eight; the average age of participants was 30 to 55.

Limited Service, Upscale Hotels Spur Growth

Mid-price hotels without food and beverage service and upscale hotels will grow supply at more than twice the rate of the overall hotel industry, according to data released Friday by PricewaterhouseCoopers. With overall hotel supply growth estimated at 1.6 percent in 2007 from 2006 levels, the mid-price without food and beverage tier will grow the most of any tier at a rate of 3.6 percent, the data indicated. PwC expects a nearly identical growth rate for upscale supply growth at 3.5 percent in 2007, more than double its 2006 growth rate of 1.7 percent. Overall, the growth rate is nearly three times the 2006 rate of 0.6 percent, as reported by Smith Travel Research. “Although the total increase in supply is dramatic, an increase of 1.6 percent is still below the long-term average of 2.2 percent,” according to Bjorn Hanson, principal with PwC's hospitality and leisure group. (*Business Travel News.com, 4/27*)

International Visits up 5 percent in January

The Commerce Department says 3.1 million international visitors traveled to the U.S. in January, an increase of 5 percent over January 2006. Canadian visitation, both air and ground, grew 7 percent over January 2006, while arrivals from Mexico, among those traveling to interior U.S. points, were up 15 percent. Overseas arrivals, excluding Canada and Mexico, increased two percent in January. Arrivals from the overseas markets have posted four consecutive months of growth. For more details, contact 202-482-0140. (*Special to TA*)

Targeting in Travel is More Important than Ever

About 124 million Americans took a vacation in the past year, amounting to 55 percent of the adult population. They typically took three trips per year, spending \$1,500 and traveling 1,200 miles from home, says a new American Express and Travel Industry Association (TIA). Traveling by car continues to be the top form of transportation for a vacation trip; however, at least one trip per year is by plane, reports [TravelMole](#). Generally, vacation travelers take at least two vacation trips that include hotel stays, but the most common accommodations are friends' or relatives' homes (24 percent) and moderately priced hotels or motels (19 percent). Americans most often take a vacation trip with their spouse or significant other (62 percent). The most popular trip destinations are cities and urban areas (39 percent), followed by small towns and rural areas (26 percent), and ocean beaches (23 percent). The most popular activities are sightseeing (51 percent) and shopping (51 percent). What is the ideal vacation trip? The report found that overall, rest and relaxation and spending time with significant others are the most important attributes of an ideal vacation. Vacation travelers would like to travel more by plane and by ship and, not surprisingly, would like to double the length of their average trip. While spending time with family is an important aspect of leisure travel, it's currently the most fulfilled need of the vacation traveler. Freedom, escape, and spending time with one's significant other are less fulfilled.